

TRR29

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i recriwtio a chadw athrawon](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Inquiry into Teacher recruitment and retention](#)

Ymateb gan: Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol
Response from: The National Centre for Learning Welsh



Response from the National Centre for Learning Welsh to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Inquiry.

1. Background

1.1 The National Centre for Learning Welsh was established by the Welsh Government in 2016 to lead the Learn Welsh sector for adults.

1.2 The Centre specialises in Language Learning and Acquisition.

1.3 The Centre's aim is to create Welsh speakers who enjoy using the language, by providing a national Learn Welsh strategy and services. Since its establishment, the Centre has transformed the Learn Welsh sector. In 2023-24, it was announced that more learners than ever before had completed Learn Welsh courses (18,330), a 45% increase since the Centre was established.

1.4 Since its establishment, the Centre has expanded its audience, developing specific schemes for audiences such as families, workplaces and young people. We also work with a number of sectors, and have developed tailored Learn Welsh programmes, for example for Early Years Care and Education, Health and Care, Further / Higher Education, Local Authorities and Sport. The Centre was recently given responsibilities to provide a national programme for the Education Workforce. The Centre also runs a programme of Confidence Building and Using Welsh courses to support speakers who lack confidence to use their Welsh.

1.5 One of the Centre's first duties was to develop a national Learn Welsh curriculum. The curriculum is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and is used across the Centre's various schemes and courses. The curriculum includes overviews demonstrating progression in the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) across levels A1 to C1. They can be used in conjunction with the functional overviews and grammatical syntaxes. As learners progress, they will learn to use the language (speaking and writing) in an increasing number of contexts. They will move from the familiar (A1) to a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar situations (B2), and will be able to undertake increasingly complex listening and reading tasks, moving from simple language in familiar contexts (A1) to much more complex and abstract language in a wide range of styles and contexts (B2). They will also be able to use a growing pool of vocabulary, styles and registers (formal and informal), grammar and syntax and pronunciation features. They will also come to use the language with increasing confidence and depth.

1.6 The Centre has selected 10 core providers, through a tendering process, to provide a variety of courses for the audiences mentioned above, alongside the fundamental work of Welsh learning for adults in the community and virtually. The sector employs a workforce of 500 tutors, managers and support staff.

1.7 In August 2021, the Welsh Government carried out a rapid review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The report stated that the Centre is:

'... recognised as a body that coordinates, plans, delivers and develops Learn Welsh provision at a national level... In the second phase of its existence, this role as a key and



strategic institution central to the acquisition of the Welsh language needs to be developed and strengthened.

1.8 The Learn Welsh sector is inspected by Estyn, within a specific framework for the Learn Welsh provision. The Centre itself is also inspected by Estyn.

1.9 The Centre's definition of learning Welsh is that it is a broad activity, and a continuum of language learning and acquisition. This includes the following:

- awareness of the Welsh language and its culture, and presenting very simple Welsh vocabulary.
- a more formal learning structure, face-to-face or virtually, which follows the CEFR levels from A1 to C1.
- confidence building activities, working with speakers who lack confidence or speakers wishing to use specialist vocabulary at work.
- opportunities for speakers to continue learning, through refresher and improvement provision.
- opportunities to use and practise Welsh in the community, at work or with peers.

2. The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Inquiry

2.1 Barriers to recruitment

Since 2024, the Centre has been responsible for a national programme for learning and developing Welsh language skills within the Statutory Education Workforce. The programme supports the Workforce, thereby tackling the challenges of upskilling, with a flexible approach grounded in learning methodologies that can be transferred to the classroom. Within the programme, opportunities are provided for students studying to become teachers.

In response to Estyn's inspection of Initial Teacher Education (September 2023), a resource was created to support Initial Teacher Education providers to provide the 35 hours of language development that form part of the course. The Centre has also created a new type of course, to be offered during June 2025, providing a 10-day course for prospective teachers. This was a pilot course, originally for 15 participants, but 51 have already signed up.

Meeting the requirements of the Welsh Language and Education Bill will require teachers with increased Welsh language skills, and the opportunity to provide this at the outset of a teacher's career is a means of ensuring the necessary support.

Reforming the way in which Welsh is presented in Initial Teacher Education could be far-reaching in terms of supporting teachers' Welsh language skills.

The Centre believes the requirement to develop personal Welsh language skills should be extended from 35 to 120 hours, enabling a prospective teacher to complete an entire progression level (CEFR) in Welsh before starting as a newly qualified teacher. For example, a prospective teacher already at Entry level (A1) before starting their course could complete the entire Foundation level (A2), and be ready to start Intermediate level (B1) by the time they start teaching. The provision should be part of the Centre's national



Learn Welsh programme for the Education Workforce, providing a clear progression pathway.

Supporting prospective teachers at the higher levels of the Learn Welsh continuum is also key, in order to give them the confidence to undertake their teaching practice in Welsh-medium schools. The Centre provides Professional Welsh courses (at Refresher level) for prospective teachers wishing to increase their confidence in their use of Welsh.

2.2 Factors affecting retention

The Centre's National Programme for learning and developing Welsh language skills within the Statutory Education Workforce supports the Workforce, thereby tackling the challenges of upskilling, with a flexible approach grounded in learning methodologies that can be transferred to the classroom.

The programme includes opportunities to follow self-study courses, tutor-led courses, residential courses, and from September 2025 onwards, the intensive learning provision (through a sabbatical scheme) will also be part of the offer. The Centre also places Learn Welsh tutors in certain schools that are changing their language medium, supporting teachers within their setting to develop their skills and confidence in the Welsh language. All courses offered by the Centre, including the Education Workforce courses, have been prepared in accordance with the CEFR (*Common European Framework for Languages*) and it is therefore clear which CEFR level, and consequently which level of the Language Competency Framework for Teachers, is being met.

All Education Workforce courses are contextualised to work in schools and with children and young people. The courses upskill teachers to use Welsh in the classroom, which in turn improves Welsh language provision for children and young people. The national programme has thus far reached over 2,000 practitioners. The Welsh Language and Education Bill provides an opportunity to further expand our work in this area, and to plan strategically in partnership with a number of organisations, such as Local Authorities to achieve the aims of their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

2.3 School Leaders; Impact on learners; Impact on delivering educational reforms; Impact on teachers and the wider workforce

All the provision in the Centre's national programme is available to **School Leaders**, as well as specific courses for leaders and aspiring leaders. There are further opportunities through professional qualifications such as the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) to ensure that elements of developing Welsh language skills are part of the expectation, intertwined with aspects of leading on the Welsh language within a school. Similarly, our Education Workforce programme has an **impact on teachers and the wider workforce** through specific and contextual courses, for example for Foundation Learning teaching assistants.

The Centre's Education Workforce programme is structured to have an **impact on learners**. One of the principles of the programme is to ensure that teachers are upskilled to support children and young people's progress in Welsh. Every element of the programme focuses on the use of Welsh with children and young people, introducing practical strategies for using Welsh within a school. In due course, this will have a positive impact on children and young people's experience of the Welsh language. It will also



ensure that the principles of **educational reform** in relation to the Welsh language in the Curriculum for Wales and the ALN Act are met.

2.4 Addressing recruitment and retention

Further developing the Centre's programme to support the Welsh language skills of the Education Workforce is crucial, in order to tackle the challenge of ensuring a workforce with suitable Welsh language skills, particularly with the introduction of the Welsh Language and Education Bill.

The Centre has expertise in Welsh Language Learning and Acquisition, and therefore fully recognizes the importance and influence of its work in a wider policy area. Through strategic planning, the Centre is already influencing progress in this area, and we believe the Centre, and the National Institute for Learning Welsh in due course, have an essential role to play in providing a broad programme of support for the Education Workforce.

The Centre believes that its National Programme for the Education Workforce should be leading a broader framework to support prospective and practising teachers, and that the Centre can expand its work to encompass this in future.

The Centre is grateful for the opportunity to take part in the consultation process. It is excited about the possibilities of continuing to evolve its work as part of the National Institute for Learning Welsh and supporting prospective and practising teachers to learn and develop their Welsh language skills, for the benefit of the children and young people of Wales.

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[Estyn inspection of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, April 2024](#)
[The National Centre for Learning Welsh: Annual Report 2023-24](#)